

April 30, 2015

History Social Science Framework Committee

Amendment Recommendations

We strongly urge the History Social Science Framework Committee to correct, expand, and refine the statement regarding Mexican repatriation during the 1930s to reflect more recent historiography as well as actions by the State of California in 2006 to acknowledge and apologize for the expulsion of Mexicans and Mexican Americans. This more comprehensive treatment is also required, because the State Legislature is presently considering AB 146 recommending the teaching of unconstitutional deportation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans during the 1930s. Moreover, politicians and community activists as well as historians and educators throughout the nation have focused on the question of fiscal remuneration as well as inclusion of the event in educational curriculum. These issues have received substantial attention and coverage in newspaper articles, television and radio reports as well as documentaries in the United States and abroad. In 2012, as stipulated in the apology act, a monument memorializing the tragic expulsion was dedicated at the LA Plaza in downtown Los Angeles. Furthermore, educators will find helpful the exhibition on unconstitutional deportation at the LA Plaza Museum as well as oral history testimony from men, women, and children who survived at the Oral History and Public Policy Center at California State University Fullerton.

Francisco E. Balderrama, Ph.D.
Emeritus Professor of Chicano Studies and History
Departments of Chicano Studies and History
California State University Los Angeles

Christine Valenciana, Ph.D.
Emeritus Associate Professor
Department of Elementary and Bilingual Education
California State University Fullerton

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During the economic collapse of the Great Depression, local, state, and federal officials launched massive efforts to get rid of the Mexicans. The hysteria led to pandemic repatriation drives done in violation of civil rights in order to save jobs for “real Americans” and to cut welfare costs. Clearly, Americans sought a convenient scapegoat and found it in the Mexican community. At least one million Mexican Nationals and Mexican Americans were unconstitutionally deported to Mexico. Of that conservative estimate, approximately sixty percent of those expelled were children and American citizens. After undergoing horrific deprivation in a foreign country, many of the American born children were determined to leave Mexico and return to their American

homeland. Many of these Americans returned home during World War II and claimed their birthright by joining the armed services and working in the defense industry. The injustice and suffering endured by the Mexican community of the Great Depression provides a preview for the violation of civil rights of Japanese and Japanese Americans and their placement in internment camps.

Sources:

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